

Michigan Statewide Assessments FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions About Assessment

Updated May 13, 2014

Please Note: This document will be continuously updated.





Accountability

1. Assuming SBAC will have percentile rankings, how will this change affect the bottom 30%?

There would not be any noticeable impact, as the percentile rankings are based on relative order of student scores.

2. Part of our accountability is growth. How will this be figured when we change tests?

We are moving to Student Growth Percentiles rather than Performance Level Change, which we currently use. Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) can be calculated regardless of change in a test. SGPs essentially say "this student scored better on this year's test than X% of the students who scored at the same level on the previous year's test in the same subject area."

3. How will parents who opt out of online testing affect our accountability?

Currently there is no rule against parents opting their students out of assessments. However, districts will still be held to the requirement of having a minimum of 95% of their students' successfully complete assessments. Students that are opted out would count against that. MDE is working on additional guidance around this topic.

4. I know it is a 'relative measure' but what if many in our bottom 30% are rarely below 30 percentile?

The bottom 30% is a within-school measure, so it would not be impacted. There are some schools in which many of their students score in the bottom 30% but do not score in the bottom 30% of the state. Focus school identification takes this into account by looking at the achievement level of the bottom 30 to exempt schools if the bottom 30% achievement is high enough.

Administration

5. How will make-up testing be handled?

Given the computer-adaptive nature of the Smarter Balanced assessments students would be able to take a make-up assessment and receive a new set of items, similar to a make-up form. For the paper-pencil option, a minimum of 2 forms will be created to allow for make-up scenarios.

6. Tell us more about plans for the paper-pencil form of assessment.

A paper-pencil option will be available for schools that are not ready to meet technology requirements. Schools that need the paper-pencil option will still get the complete assessment including classroom activities and performance tasks; however, reports may come later for paper-pencil schools than schools that administered the assessment online. This need may continue into the foreseeable future for students, who for religious reasons, are not able to take a test by computer, and for some students with disabilities who may require paper-pencil assessments due to the nature of their disability.





7. Tell us more about the test windows - there are many rumors.

Please see the 2014-15 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition Update document published on our website in early April 2014. www.michigan.gov/baa

- 8. Is there enough time between pilots and spring 2015 to ensure that SBAC/MI Interim are ready for all students in Michigan? We need details on test windows, length of windows, etc.
 - Please see the 2014-15 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition Update document published on our website in early April 2014. www.michigan.gov/baa
- 9. Will the testing window include testing session length times for each subject/grade level?

Please see the 2014-15 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition Update document published on our website in early April 2014. www.michigan.gov/baa

10. Please share what grades will be assessed in writing?

The Smarter Balanced Assessments will be measuring English language arts (ELA) in grades 3-8 and 11. The ELA assessment will measure reading, writing, and listening. This will be available in other grades through the optional interim assessment system.

College Entrance & Work Skills Examinations

11. Will MME be online in the Spring 2015?

All 11th grade assessments will be available online, except for the college entrance and work skills examinations. Potential providers of those two assessments are developing online capability but it will not be ready for 2014-15.

12. Can you talk about the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a college entrance exam?

Currently the state is in the process of evaluating RFP's for both the college entrance examination and the work skills examination. Information will be distributed as soon as possible.

Interim Assessments

13. Given the current non-commitment of the state to fund the assessment system, is there any possibility that the funding for the interim assessments will be made the responsibility of the local districts?

If the legislature does not fund interim assessments for MDE and if a district desires to use interim assessments as tool to measure student growth, then yes it would be a local cost.





14. I heard you say that the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) is essentially the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Why is there a need for "MME specific" interim assessments in math and ELA (on the chart available 2017) to be created if they already exist in SBAC?

Michigan is committed to creating a suite of high school course, or module-based interim assessments, that would allow a teacher to have an opportunity to administer an interim test that accurately covers content delivered in that course. Between the use of Smarter Balanced high school interims or Michigan-developed high school interims, we feel those needs will be met. This fulfills the need for both a general assessment to cover growth for which generalists (such as lower-grade teachers and administrators) are responsible and a specialized assessment to cover growth for which specialists (e.g., biology, trigonometry, algebra, and world history teachers) are responsible.

15. Is science and social studies spring summative the same as post-Michigan interim assessments?

Required summative tests for science and social studies will continue to be offered in grades 4 & 7 for science and grades 5 & 8 for social studies. When science and social studies interims are rolled out operationally in 2017-18, schools will have the option to use the end-of-year summative assessment as their post-test if a summative test is present in that grade. Please see page 7 and 8 of the 2014-15 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition Update document published on our website in early April 2014 for a roll-out schedule of our interim assessments. www.michigan.gov/baa

Professional Development

16. What professional development will be offered on the digital library (SBAC)?

Please see page 9 of the 2014-15 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition Update document published on our website in early April 2014. www.michigan.gov/baa

Scoring and Reporting

17. How will cut scores be determined for SBAC? By Vendor? By State?

Cut scores will be set through a standard setting process run by the consortium. Michigan has had an opportunity to review and comment on the method and plan and will have participants involved in the process. MDE staff also participated in the selection of the vendor and sat on a committee charged with the oversight of the contractor's work.

18. How certain is the funding to support scoring?

Currently funds to support scoring are in place in the Executive Budget Recommendation.





Smarter Balanced Assessments

19. If I need help or support for the Smarter Balanced Field-Test, whom do I contact? Smarter Balanced? MDE? Name? Email address?

Please contact the Smarter Balanced Help Desk at www.smarterbalancedhelpdesk@ets.org or 1-(855)-833-1969.

20. Can you tell us more about the bank of items through SBAC? How many? How they were developed?

There are approximately 40,000 total items in the Smarter Balanced item pool. These items were developed through cross-state efforts, either by monitoring item writing and processes done by vendors contracted by SBAC, or by states themselves creating items through the efforts of state educators. Michigan has been highly involved in both types of efforts, and has had 43 educators trained and involved in item writing or review to date.

21. Can you address why the MDE has made statements that the SBAC is really the only real option?

Please see the Report to the Legislature on Options for Assessments Aligned with the Common Core State Standards published on December 1, 2013 and the attached response to questions from the Michigan legislature. www.michigan.gov/baa

22. Will MDE/SBAC release test questions yearly as they have done in the past with MEAP?

Practice tests and sample questions are currently available at <u>www.smarterbalanced.org</u>. Test questions will be released as they are retired from the item bank.

Students with Disabilities

23. Will the MI Access testing windows be the same as in previous years? Does that mean fall and spring testing windows will all move to the fall?

MI-Access will also be moving to spring assessment in 2015. Please see page 12 of the 2014-15 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition Update document published on our website in early April 2014. www.michigan.gov/baa

24. Will MI-Access be administered online?

We are anticipating administering MI-Access Functional Independence assessments online in 2015, with a paper-pencil back-up option, as will be offered for the general assessment. MI-Access Supported Independence and Participation Assessments will be administered as they have been in the past, with an online answer document component (completed by the assessment administrator).





25. Will MEAP-Access no longer be available? Will more direction be given to special education directors on the language to include on IEPs for students?

MEAP-Access is no longer included in Michigan's suite of assessments. Students that previously took MEAP-Access were provided instruction based on Common Core State Standards and would likely take the general assessment (expected to be Smarter Balanced). The adaptability features of the test better captures student needs for all populations (including those that previously took MEAP-Access). Please contact Linda Howley (HowleyL@michigan.gov) or John Jaquith (JaquithJ@michigan.gov)

26. What should IEP teams fill in for the type of assessment a child must take next year?

The name of the General Assessment does not need to be listed on the IEP, however, listing the general assessment content area and accommodations should be provided (e.g., General Assessment Mathematics, frequent breaks). For alternate assessments, list the test the student would take under the current selection guidelines (e.g., "MI-Access Supported Independence Mathematics" followed by the words "or Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) if available." Please contact John Jaquith (jaquithj@michigan.gov) or Joanne Winkelman (winkelmanl@michigan.gov) for further guidance.

27. How closely is your Office of Standards and Assessment (OSA) working with MDE's Special Education staff regarding SBAC, DLM, and accountability?

OSA is working closely with MDE's Office of Special Education to provide clear guidance on transitioning to the 2014-15 school year and on the future of alternate assessments. Please contact John Jaquith (JaquithJ@michigan.gov) or Joanne Winkelman (WinkelmanJ@michigan.gov) for further information.

28. If assessment accommodations need to be aligned to Smarter Balanced, will the recommendation in the state IEP model be updated?

The Office of Standards and Assessment is working closely with MDE's Office of Special Education to provide clear guidance on assessment accommodations beginning in the 2014-15 school year. MDE is currently reviewing policies on accommodations for all assessments (including SBAC) and will be working with stakeholders across the state. If you have questions please contact Linda Howley (howley-learn-gov) or Jen Paul (Paul (PaulJ@michigan.gov) for further information.

Teacher Evaluation

29. Is the intent that interim assessments will be mandated to be used for evaluation, or will districts still have a say on what they use for growth data?

Interim assessments provided by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will be an optional tool for districts to use as one potential measure of student growth in teacher evaluations. Districts could use any assessment they decide to use. There would be no cost to the district if they adopt, as their option, the state interim assessments.





Technology

- 30. Will there be more detailed information offered about computer-system requirements? For example, we heard that computers that have Windows XP will not work with SBAC Assessment.
 - The system requirements are available online at http://mtrax.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Michigan-Testing-Device-Requirements.pdf. Windows XP is still a supported operating system.
- 31. What about browser compatibility for assessments? More and more testing companies are compatible with Chrome only, or Firefox only, or Internet Explorer only, SBAC is supposed to be Internet Explorer compatible, but warm ups required Chrome.
 - The Smarter Balanced practice tests will be available within the online test delivery system. A specific web browser such as Chrome will not be required to access the practice tests.

WIDA

32. Does MDE expect the WIDA assessment to be given online in spring during the SBAC testing window? Please see the 2014-15 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition Update document published on our website in early April 2014. www.michigan.gov/baa